

ONE PENNY.

Did
Jesus Christ
teach
Socialism ?

BY

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CHAPTER I.

WHAT IS SOCIALISM?

In dealing with Christianity and Socialism, it will first be necessary to state what Socialism is.

Socialism is an ethical system founded on justice and truth.

Yes! but to those who embrace it in its fulness it is infinitely more even than this; it is a heartfelt, soul-inspiring religion, resting upon the love of God. Such Socialism realises how man is being led into a higher, fuller life on earth; how selfishness, bestiality, self-interest, and competition must eventually give way to the law of love.

Socialism recognises the Oneness of Humanity, that no portion of humanity has any inherent rights beyond or superior to any other portion; and that differences of grade and of advantages are not natural, but are circumstantial and artificial.

Socialism therefore declares it to be the duty of man to remove all artificial barriers to the improvement of circumstances; in order that Humanity as a whole may have freedom and all possible assistance to attain to its full stature, physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Socialism seeks to improve the physical, mental, and spiritual environment of every man, woman, and child, so that all mankind may be purer, healthier, happier, stronger, nobler; and that each generation may be nearer perfection than the one immediately preceding.

Socialism says that, Humanity being one, it should be treated as one; that part should not be indulged at the expense of the whole; that each part should contribute to the whole according to its ability; and that each part should receive from the whole according to its necessity. Should any part suffer, the whole ought to minister to its relief; and should any part receive a blessing, it ought to be used for the benefit of the whole.

Socialism condemns as reactionary and immoral all that tends to the debasement of Humanity. It condemns our industrial and commercial system as a degrading system—degrading both to the few who amass wealth and to the many who by their labour enable the few to lay up riches. It is degrading to those who rob, and to those who are robbed; to those who cheat, and to those who are cheated; to those who swim, and to those who sink; to those who revel in luxury, and to those who, barely sustaining their own lives, are compelled by their toil to supply luxuries for others to enjoy; to those who are idle, and to those who are compelled by their industry to supply the needs of the idle; to those who destroy their lives by rioting and debauchery, and to those who, through our system, are forced to yield the fruits of their honest toil, in order that such shameful and disgusting practices may be continued. Degrading to all, in that it maintains a low standard of life; and that it tends to selfishness and meanness, instead of to generosity and nobility of character.

In the place of this system, Socialism advocates the nationalisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange; so that the nation may benefit by the nation's labour.

As blood gives life to the body, and as its congestion is the cause of sickness and death, so material wealth, by means of which society's existence is maintained, must be freely circulated to all parts of society. Its congestion causes derangement, disorder, disease, discord, disintegration, disruption, and dissolution.

But nationalisation is only the beginning of Socialism.

Once let any nation be thoroughly imbued with the Socialist spirit, it will become a missionary nation. It will preach the glad tidings of salvation to people of other tongues, and that which was national shall become universal: East and West, North and South, all shall realise, all shall rejoice in the glorious Brotherhood of Man.

Then "swords shall be beaten into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks." Then, instead of destruction shall be fruitfulness; instead of war shall be helpfulness; instead of hatred shall be love. Then may come the time when "the lion shall lie down with the lamb," and when "none shall hurt nor destroy." Then shall each seek the good of all; for the whole of Humanity shall be united by, led by, governed by, Love.

Then, and not until then, shall the work of Socialism be fulfilled.

CHAPTER II.

**INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE GOSPELS
ON THE SUBJECT OF SOCIALISM.**

We now turn to Christianity ; not as represented by the different churches to-day ; because they, whilst having in them much that is good, are contaminated with worldliness, error, and superstition.

If any do not believe this, will they take the trouble to learn what the different churches say of each other ? If they do, they will probably conclude that the contamination of which we speak does exist, to a greater or less extent.

But we choose rather to behold Christ ; to notice the circumstances connected with His birth ; to examine His perfect life ; and to learn the truth from His teaching.

At the commencement let us recollect three facts.

1. Christ came to "show us the Father" ; therefore, in learning from Christ, we learn the will of God.

2. Christ taught abstract truths and general principles, by means of which mankind might work out its own salvation. Therefore, for instance, we must not conclude that He approved of the Roman Empire because He did not stir up the Jews to cast off its yoke at that time. Much less must we assume that He favoured the Imperialistic spirit. Having revealed the Father and shown the way by which mankind might become more like God, He expects mankind to remove all obstacles. Neither must we say that He upheld private ownership, in contradistinction to collectivism, because He did not urge the Jews, at that time, to at once nationalise their means of production, etc. But we *must* recollect that His teaching and example were such that His followers, lived after He was withdrawn from them, *a life of absolute Socialism*. Therefore, in seeking to establish Socialism, we are only attempting that which was done, on a small scale, by His immediate followers.

3. The kingdom which Christ came to establish was an universal kingdom. He came to establish the law of Love. He taught that God was a God of Love, and that mankind must submit to be governed by His spirit. But He left His principles to be applied according to particular circumstances. He brought the salt to purify and the leaven to leaven the whole of Humanity. He sowed a grain of mustard seed, which should grow into a tree. He laid a corner-stone for the building of an impregnable fortress.

Bearing these truths in mind, let us ask ourselves the following questions :—

1. Is Socialism the kind of fruit we have a right to expect on a tree of Christ's planting ?
2. Is Socialism pure, as we have a right to expect after Christ's salting ?
3. Is Socialism of the nature we have a right to expect after Christ's leavening ?
4. Is Socialism of the character we have a right to expect in a building of which Christ laid the corner-stone ?
5. Would Socialism evolve naturally from Christ's revelation and teaching ?

I answer yes to all these questions.

There are three ways in which we learn Socialism from Christ : by deduction, by example, and by instruction.

CHAPTER III.

THE COMING OF CHRIST.

According to the Gospel narrative, John the Baptist was specially chosen by God to prepare for the coming of Christ. He was the son of a priest, but does not appear to have been himself a priest. He lived a simple life in the wilderness ; his clothing was of a rough texture, and his food was plain in the extreme. He was independent, honest, loyal, and courageous. He fulfilled his mission by rebuking the rich and powerful, and preaching glad tidings to the poor.

There is a man in England who resembles John the Baptist, and that man is Keir Hardie, the respected leader of the Labour Party.

John declared that *all* flesh should see the salvation of God. He told the soldiers to do violence to no man, nor exact from any man wrongfully ; the publicans or tax-gatherers not to exploit the people ; whilst those who prided themselves on their ancestry he called "offspring of vipers," and told them not to trust in their ancestry, but to divide their goods amongst those who had not food or clothing. Herod, the king, he accused of immorality, and told him that it was not lawful for him to take his brother's wife.

What rank Socialism ! No wonder he was put in prison and beheaded.

But he was *God's chosen servant*.

When Jesus was born, angels were sent by God as heralds, but to whom were they sent ?

According to our modern ideas of courtesy they should have

been sent either to the Roman Emperor, the Jewish King, or to the Jewish High Priest.

But there surely must be something wrong with our modern ideas; for no tidings were sent to either of these persons, nor to any other person of rank or authority. The angels came to some working men—shepherds, keeping watch over their flocks by night; and their message was one of good tidings for *all people*.

It was very Socialistic. But—God sent the angels.

In choosing a mother for His Son, the rich and powerful were passed over by God. No palace was selected as suitable for His home. He was born in a stable, of a working girl, who was engaged to a carpenter.

Why do you think God chose that Christ should be born amongst the working classes? Was it to show sympathy with the afflictions of the poor? Had that been the reason, He might have been born a slave; or He might have been a leper.

No, Christ came to set an example to men of an ideal life. He was not born a slave, He was not a leper; slavery and leprosy are to be avoided.

He was not born amongst the rich; for the amassing of riches by a few, which is the great cause of the poverty of the many, is a thing, like slavery and leprosy, to be avoided.

Christ was born amongst the working classes, because labour—free, useful, and under proper conditions—is something to which all should aspire. To exist on the labour of others, except by reason of incapacity, is a disgrace. But for men to exercise their abilities for the common good is to fulfil their proper functions. Such labour is dignified; it contributes to the highest well-being of humanity.

By the birth of Christ amongst the workers, the Almighty set His seal to a picture which all ages should behold, and the title of the picture is—“The dignity of Labour.”

Yet that He might be one with the poor in the trials that beset their path, He was born in a stable like a little outcast.

Notwithstanding her condition, and the long journey she had endured, as she was only a working girl, there was no room for the mother of Jesus in the inn.

If inclined to play a coward's part in the presence of the powerful, we may remember the bravery and sterling honesty of John the Baptist. If inclined to despise labour, we may remember whom God honoured by sending to them heralds of the coming of His Son. And if inclined to treat a working girl with less respect than a “lady,” we may remember the mother of our Lord.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

As Christ was born, so He lived.

From the time when Herod, the King, sought to take the young child's life to the time when the heads of the Church, together with the rulers of the people, succeeded in bringing about His crucifixion, His life was spent as one of the people, with the people, and for the people. His early life was spent at Nazareth—a despised city—where He was subject to Joseph and Mary. He probably learnt Joseph's trade, worked under him, and helped him to provide for the little home and the younger children.

We see Him at a simple marriage feast, where they ran short of wine—the common beverage—and He supplied their needs. We hear him upbraided for eating with publicans and sinners. And we hear the wretched scandal-mongers talking of Him as a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.

Again, we get a glance of Him in the house of Lazarus, and Martha and Mary, where he enjoyed two of the greatest of earthly blessings—sweet companionship and true friendship.

Twice He was the guest of a Pharisee. On both occasions He offended the proprieties; and on both occasions He condemned His host in terms which were not mincing. On the first occasion He permitted a woman—a poor sister who had been a sinner—to bathe His feet with her tears, and wipe them with the hair of her head. But the self-righteous ones imputed evil in the action, whereupon Jesus compared the scant courtesy of His host with the genuine, heartfelt, self-abandoning love of the woman. On the second occasion the Pharisee took exception to Christ's neglect of the ceremonial ablution before eating. Jesus replied in scathing language, speaking of the hypocritical practices of the Pharisees generally.

There is only one occasion recorded, that we know of, on which Jesus went to the house of a rich man without condemning him; and he was only a despised tax-gatherer. But please notice how this man commended himself to Christ. He did not say "I accept your teaching; I desire further instruction with regard to your kingdom; I believe you to be the Holy One of God;" or, "I am constant in my attendance at the House of God;" but, "The half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation I restore him four-fold."

"The half of my goods I give to the poor." He seemed to

understand Christ's standard of manhood: he showed his estimate of Christ's character. So the incident affords remarkable testimony to the Socialistic character of the life of Jesus.

Another incident in the life of our Lord shows His superiority to His environment; his freedom from convention; his insight into character; his compassion, and love, and tenderness for the fallen. They brought unto Him a woman taken in adultery—not the man, only the woman—and they reminded Him that according to a certain law she should be stoned. Christ stooped down and wrote upon the ground. Was it partly to relieve the poor creature's discomfiture? Then he said "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone." And they all went away. Jesus said, "Woman, where are thine accusers? Doth no man condemn thee?" She said, "No man, Lord." And the Lord replied, "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more." No word of reproach! No, the ruling principle in His kingdom is love. Besides, she was probably only a poor woman. Reproach he used towards the oppressors of His brethren and sisters, not to such as she was. According to the gospels, Christ, as a rule, condemned the rich, and those in authority; and had compassion on the people. He was constantly going about amongst the people; not lecturing them; not finding fault with them; but making the lame to walk, giving sight to the blind, healing the sick, curing the lepers, feeding the hungry, and spreading glad tidings. He spoke in the temple and in the synagogues; but on one occasion He was turned out of a synagogue for His heterodox teaching. From the authorities He received the kind of treatment which the leaders of the people who condemn abuses may expect. His denunciation of the authorities for their tyranny, extortion, and hypocrisy were terrible. He exposed the hollowness, the absurdities, and the shams in connection with their religion. He led the people to regard these things with contempt.

In their place he taught a high ethical standard and system; a truly spiritual religion, by means of which the people might regulate and govern their lives, without the intervention of either the scribes, pharisees, or priests; and which broke down all barriers of race or class. Therefore, by bribery and lying, the heads of the Church and the rulers of the people procured His betrayal, His mocking, scourging, and His crucifixion, as a social and political agitator and a blasphemer. He died in our cause, the cause of the people. Christ, by His death, completed his perfect example of renunciation in the cause of Humanity. Only by laying down the life of the body could He be fully united with the Father.

It is by following His example, by the crucifixion of the flesh, in renunciation for Humanity, that each man's spirit may obtain the victory over his animal nature. Man, as an animal, is said to have reached the highest point of evolution. Henceforth, however, evolution will continue in his spiritual nature. Man is only "a little lower than God, and is crowned with glory and honour." But the crown of glory and honour must be won by self-sacrifice.

CHAPTER V.

THE TEACHING OF CHRIST.

I.—THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

Christ taught that men should regard God as their Father, and that He is a loving Father. Other forms of religion have taught the existence of a power superior to man; but has any other revealed that superior power as Jesus revealed God? As the tender, compassionate, loving Father? As a God, who, in the person of His only begotten Son, has united His nature with Humanity; and by the cords of love draws men unto Himself? As a Father who delights to give good things unto His children; to hold communion with them; to comfort them in their afflictions; to guide them in their aspirations; to help them in their endeavours; and to rejoice in their successes?

Some say "If God be a God of love, how comes it that evil exists?" I am not going to reply to that question. Not because I consider it a foolish one, for it is a most natural question; but simply because I do not know. I do not understand any more than I understand my own existence, or the existence of God. But as a practical man I accept facts. I know that the world exists, and that men exist in the world. I see by their effects that both a spirit of good and a spirit of evil exist in the world. I see that the spirit of good is working for the salvation of humanity, and that the spirit of evil is working for the destruction of humanity. That is the state of things to-day.

Now if God be a God of love, He will desire man's salvation. How then did Christ reveal Him? Christ revealed the great heart of God as yearning for the salvation of all Humanity. That is the important fact for us to remember.

But men say "If God knows what mankind requires, what is the use of telling Him? Of what use is prayer?"

An earthly father likes his children to tell him their requirements ; and knows that it is better for them to do so than that their wants should appear to be automatically supplied. So I believe that our Heavenly Father has pleasure in communion with His children, and that it is Humanity's privilege and benefit to hold communion with the Father. Prayer is good for those who pray.

"But," my friend says, "allowing that to be so, what use is it to pray for other people ? Their minds cannot be affected by it."

There I do not agree with my friend. I believe that their minds can be and are affected by the prayer of other portions of Humanity. I should like to suggest a few thoughts and leave the subject with you.

1. It is good for those who pray that their minds and the r affections should be excited on behalf of others.

2. Such excitement spreads to others with whom he who prays is at the time in direct contact.

3. Humanity has a spiritual as well as an animal nature. That spiritual nature is one throughout, being derived directly from God. It is therefore probable that bodily proximity is by no means necessary for spiritual contact ; or for one portion of Humanity to be affected by the fervent desire of another portion. That this should be the case in the spiritual world is not a matter for wonder when we recollect that even in the physical world the working of a handle in America may, by means of electricity, set in motion a needle in England.

4. Unless man's free will be destroyed, it appears to be necessary for God to work in conjunction with man's will for the salvation of Humanity.

Let me illustrate my point by our British Constitution. King Edward may have, for aught I know, Socialist tendencies ; but he can only act in conjunction with his Lords and Commons. Autocratic action would be subversive of the British Constitution. And the House of Commons can only act in conjunction with the expressed will of the nation, or the rights of the people will be infringed. So although the King may rejoice to hear the cry for Socialism, may rejoice at the increasing enthusiasm, and at every step in advance, he can only grant it when the nation demands it. But here the illustration stops, for the spirit of God the Father leads His children both to will and to do those things which are acceptable unto His Divine Majesty, being also for His children's good.

5. In the last place, we have evidence that God hears prayer, in constant apparent answers to prayer.

Our proof of this must be obtained chiefly from those who are in communion with the Father. If people desire a reply from the King, it follows that they must first place themselves in communication with him ; it would be ridiculous for those to expect a reply who had sent no message, and who ignored his existence.

And Jesus taught men to pray "Thy Kingdom come"—the time when Humanity shall be filled with the love of God ; when all forms of base selfishness shall have been overcome. Without God, we might imagine a future for the world increasingly miserable and horrible ; a future in which the worst side of man's nature would rule, until humanity itself would be lost, and only the beast would survive.

Let us not destroy the faith of the children in their Father, but let the love of God flow through us to the whole of Humanity.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TEACHING OF CHRIST (*continued*).

II.—THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN.

If God be the Father of all men, it naturally follows that all men are brethren.

Yes, but even amongst brethren there are inequalities ; they have not all the same gifts.

Granted, they have not all the same gifts, or faculties, or capabilities ; and the parents who take no notice of differences in the inclinations of their children are not wise.

But all good parents will try to obtain for their children full opportunity for the perfect development of their energies, towards whatever useful object their particular energies may be best applied. Likewise, the youth of a family should all be ready, each to assist the other, whether brother or sister ; in order that all may grow and develop, each in the direction best suited to his or her nature.

Did Christ then teach that men should so act to each other ? Let us see.

But just by way of parenthesis let me remark that the very wealthy classes, notwithstanding their tremendous advantages, supply comparatively little in the way of useful genius, or anything else that is not a curse instead of a blessing to Humanity. And yet there is an awful sacrifice of the people for their support.

Christ taught that men must love God their Father with all their heart, and mind, and soul; *and* their neighbours as themselves.

Who are their neighbours? In order to explain that, Jesus made use of a forcible illustration in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Jesus was addressing Jews, who regarded Samaritans with contempt, and perhaps the last people to be treated as neighbours.

The meaning was that *all* men must be treated as neighbours, and loved as a man would love himself.

Again, Christ said "Whosoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." That is to say, let a man so treat another as he would wish that other to treat him, were the positions reversed.

Christ gave ample scope for ambition, but taught that the *object* of ambition should be the service of Humanity—the exact opposite of men's ambition to-day, which is to be served by Humanity.

Jesus said "Whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister: he that is the greater among you let him become as the younger; and he that is chief as he that doth serve." But in what capacity should he serve?

The answer to that Christ gave in the most graphic manner. In the East it was the custom for a servant to wash the feet of his master; it was considered a menial and degraded occupation. In order therefore to enforce the lesson, Jesus washed the feet of His disciples, and then told them that they should serve each other as He had thus served them.

The meaning is plain, namely, that we should "Honour all men, and be "In honour preferring one another." That all should seek and practise, not honour, but service, even the most menial. Not only treating all as equals, but "Each esteeming other better than himself."

Again, He said "Be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father on the earth; for one is your Father which is in Heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, The Christ."

Now this is particularly definite teaching; and it becomes terribly emphatic when we add to it Christ's prophecy of His coming again: not then as the Saviour, but as the Judge; for which I will refer you to Matt. xxiv. 45 to end of the next chapter.

It will be observed that in this description of the Judgment by our Lord Himself, that which is required is not creed, not

the observance of ceremonies, not membership of any particular church ; but simply the service of Humanity, the brethren of Christ, especially distressed Humanity. “ Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye did it unto Me.”

CHAPTER VII.

THE TEACHING OF CHRIST (*continued*).

III.—THE POSSESSION OF WEALTH.

Having seen that Christ taught the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, we are naturally led to ask whether He said anything with regard to the possession of wealth—that is, the individual holding of material riches—because we recognise that to be the cause of the great inequalities existing to-day between members of the human family. In the absence of any direct teaching on the subject, we should conclude from the circumstances attending the coming of Jesus, from his life, and from his declaration that men must acknowledge God as their Father, and each other as brethren, that such inequalities could not exist in a world which was governed in accordance with His will. In that conclusion we should be perfectly correct.

These inequalities, then, can only be explained by the acknowledgment of the existence of evil. Now as we have before observed, man has to work out his own salvation, and to conquer evil in whatever shape it may be found. Therefore, even if we had no instructions on the subject, we should feel justified in doing our utmost to destroy these inequalities, which tend to the degradation of Humanity, and to bring about what would appear to be a saner, and juster, and more beneficent system.

But what were our Lord’s instructions ? Before directly answering that question, let me for a moment direct your attention to the insignificant position of the pioneers of Christianity, and ask you to remember the influence of wealth, and the assistance which it renders in the promulgation of new ideas.

We can see that, according to modern theories and practices, the way to spread the doctrines of Christ was, first, to “ raise money.” We should regard it as an absolute necessity. And yet the teaching of Christ was directly and absolutely opposed to the accumulation and possession of material wealth.

Jesus told His disciples to sell all that they had, and to give—not to the Church—to the poor. When sending them out on their mission, He allowed them to take nothing with

them. He taught them to pray "Give us this day our daily bread"; to trust their Heavenly Father to supply the daily necessities of life. He taught God's care for the lilies of the field and the birds of the air; and that the members of His human family were of much greater importance in the Father's eyes: therefore they should trust Him to provide. He taught them that they should not be anxious, saying, "What shall we eat, or what shall we put on?" but should pay attention to their higher spiritual nature.

Again, He said "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, for where your treasure is there will your heart be also."

How we see this to be true! And how also we may have experienced the baneful influence of material inclinations. Are not many whom we know to-day living a low, material, selfish existence, because their affections are set upon their material wealth? Do we not indulge in contempt for such people? But who are we, that we should judge or feel contempt? Rather let us be on our guard, for Christ mentioned also other pitiful tragedies; and we likewise see them around us. These are cases where men have begun a spiritual life, and "the deceitfulness of riches" have choked the life.

A ruler once asked what he should do to inherit eternal life. He professed to have kept the Commandments. Christ replied "Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and come, follow Me." He went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. And Jesus said "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of Heaven; it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle."

Our Lord illustrated His teaching regarding the possession of riches by two parables. In one of these, a type of the successful business man decides to securely invest his riches, and have a good time—Eat, drink, be merry. How men would fawn upon him. How his satellites would praise him to his face. How he would be held up as a pattern of business rectitude. How great wisdom and goodness would be ascribed to him. How when he invited people to dine with him, his hospitality, geniality, generosity, and good fellowship would be proclaimed. How his fellows would boast of his acquaintance-ship. How his condescension to better men than himself would be applauded. How, when he flung a small coin to a beggar, his kindness to the poor would be announced. How, perchance, priests would curry favour with him, and how they would meekly seek for gifts from him, to assist the work of God. What a God-fearing, high-minded man they would declare him to be. What a blessing it would be to the neighbourhood that he so lived on the fruits of other men's labour.

St. Luke
12, 20 GOD said "Thou fool."

In the second instance, there appears the type of an aristocrat; rich, clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day. At his gate was one of the pests of society—a poor, wretched beggar, full of sores. How he had brought himself into that "disgraceful condition" is not stated. He actually had the "impertinence" to desire to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table.

Really! if the rich man were to feed all the idle beggars, he might be obliged to live less sumptuously himself. Still, as they were brothers—although the rich man did not acknowledge the relationship—there might be some excuse for the beggar. However, the rich man treated him as rich men treat poor men to-day. He did not treat him as he would have wished to be treated, had the positions been reversed. Therefore the positions *were* reversed.

The poor beggar died. What a relief! But look! There are angels attending at his release from the body, and they carry his tired spirit with loving honour, and lay him in Abraham's bosom.

The rich man also died, and his people buried his pampered body. But in Hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw the poor beggar away in Abraham's bosom.

At last the rich man began to learn Socialist principles. He did not speak to the beggar; he could not very well, owing to their strained relationship on earth. Still he requested Abraham to send Lazarus to relieve his torments, although on earth he had neglected the torments of Lazarus. It might possibly be the beginning of more friendly relations between them. But Abraham replied "Thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus evil things; but now, here he is comforted and thou art in anguish."

Thus our Lord taught the vanity, the danger, the worthlessness, and the degrading nature of material wealth, when held by individuals for their own base ends, instead of being used for the benefit of humanity.

"Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." "Choose ye now therefore whom ye will serve"—God and Humanity, Christ and His brethren, or materialism.

CHAPTER VIII. CONCLUSION.

Having first explained what Socialism is, and then having learnt the mind of God, as revealed in connection with the birth and life of Christ, and also by His teaching, it remains

for us to arrive at a definite conclusion as to whether Socialism is in accordance with the revealed will of God.

The main principles and objects of Socialism are—

1. The oneness of Humanity, or the brotherhood of man.
2. The removal of artificial barriers, which divide and separate mankind.
3. Free scope for perfect development of the race.
4. The improvement of environment.
5. The use of God's gifts for the benefit of all.

In order to procure the fulfilment of these principles and objects, it is advocated that we should gradually bring about the nationalization of the means of production, distribution, and exchange.

As we have seen, the principles and objects are taught in the Gospels. The means suggested for their fulfilment are necessary, and naturally evolve from the principles.

Our present system is contrary to and subversive of the teaching of Christ. For instance : how is it possible to retain our present system, and obey the following instructions ?

1. "Love thy neighbour as thyself."
2. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."
3. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth."

The system we now have is destructive of the physical, mental, and spiritual life of man ; whereas Christ said "I came that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly." And that will be the effect of Socialism.

The early Church was a Socialist commune. Had the following generations been true to their Master's example and teaching, what horrors in the shape of religious persecutions would have been avoided, and how different would have been the world to-day.

To-day, in our pulpits, truths are either omitted or altered to suit present-day views. To-day, the members of the different churches do not walk in the footsteps of Christ. To-day, artificial barriers are raised which obstruct the progress of those who strive to follow the teaching of Christ. To-day, the forms of church government are largely unchristian. To-day, men are chosen for office in the churches because they are rich ; whilst the poor, like Lazarus, are outside the gate. There was no room for the mother of Christ in the inn. And there is often no room for the brethren and sisters of Christ—when destitute—in the churches. Therefore Christ remains outside with His brethren. And if the churches be not lighted with the light of Christ's presence, what can we expect in the world but darkness and misery ?

There, Christ's little ones are perishing, and their cry for their Rights of Brotherhood, disregarded or denounced by the churches, has been heard by some outside, and finds its expression in the Socialist movement.

Yet although the truth has been obscured in the churches, it has not been lost ; and probably their teaching has had more influence than anything else in opening the eyes of the people to the fact that they were, consciously or unconsciously, being defrauded of their rights. Science and philosophy have also assisted the movement.

Do not mistake me. I do not say that the churches have deliberately and wilfully perverted the truth with regard to the rights of Humanity. On the contrary, I think that they, like the rest of the world, have been labouring under the delusion that the present system could not be changed ; consequently, although they have preached Brotherhood, they have not realized its full significance. Inconsistency has been the result of misconception, and misconception has been the result of neglecting the Socialist teaching of Christ.

In all ages since the time of Christ there have been Christians, as lights in the world, who have lived holy lives of renunciation on behalf of Humanity. But the churches lost their simplicity, therefore it has only been the self-denying lives of individual members that has kept the flame of love burning as brightly as it has burnt within the churches.

Now there is an awakening, both inside and outside the churches. Many have decided to live and work for Humanity. There is men's work in front of us ; but it is not work for selfish ends. There is a steep hill to climb ; but whilst we are climbing we are helping Humanity to reach the top. There are prejudices to overcome ; and there is stupidity to be enlightened. There are foes to be faced ; and there are obstacles to be removed. But if our own eye remain single, and our own heart pure, then friction will but increase the glow of love ; and love is the power which shall overcome the world.

Did Jesus Christ teach Socialism ? Unless we are prepared to deny the truth of the Gospel, there can be but one answer—Yes. And Socialism naturally evolves from Christianity.

Our present system is brutal in its origin, its methods, and its results, being based on the animal instinct of self-preservation.

Socialism is divine in its origin, its methods, and its results, being based on altruism.

The origin of Socialism is not the cry or demand for justice, although Socialism rightly demands justice. The origin of Socialism is to be found in altruism, which seeks the good of others. And the source of altruism is THE FATHER'S LOVE, THE LOVE OF GOD, OUR FATHER.

